



Faculty of Social Sciences

SOCB34, Sociology: Managing Sustainability, Society and Collective Behaviour, 15 credits

Sociologi: Miljösociologi, hållbar utveckling och miljöpolitik, 15 högskolepoäng
First Cycle / Grundnivå

Details of approval

The syllabus was approved by the board of the Department of Sociology on 2024-11-21. The syllabus comes into effect 2025-01-06 and is valid from the autumn semester 2025.

General information

The course is given as a stand-alone course and as an elective within SGUTV, Bachelor of Science Programme in Development Studies, 180 credits.

Language of instruction: English

Main field of study *Specialisation*

Sociology G1N, First cycle, has only upper-secondary level entry requirements

Learning outcomes

For a pass grade on the course, the student is to be able to

Knowledge and understanding

- demonstrate a basic understanding of debates on sustainability and the relationship between nature and society based on sociological theories of risk, knowledge uncertainty and modernity as well as environmental ethical perspectives (1)
- demonstrate basic knowledge of historical and contemporary divisions between natural and cultural/social/artificial and how such divisions have been reflected and challenged in parts of classical and modern social science (2)

- Demonstrate knowledge of social factors underlying some of the environmental challenges in, for example, the food, tourism and transport, energy sectors, often linked to our everyday lives (3)
- demonstrate a basic knowledge of the ideologies and scientific theories that underpin different perceptions of environmental and sustainability problems, their causes and possible solutions (4)

Competence and skills

- apply sociological analysis to complex environmental and sustainability issues, identifying conflicts of objectives within and between the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainability, with a particular focus on equality and power aspects (5)
- analyse social norms and power dynamics surrounding different sustainability policies and instruments (6)
- explain the importance of social movements and activism for a sustainable transition (7)
- discuss narratives around future visions of sustainability (8)
- concretely and precisely be able to present acquired knowledge in speech and writing in a professional manner (9)
- demonstrate the ability to take a critical position on literature and independently seek and evaluate scholarly texts (10)
- master basic reference management (11)

Judgement and approach

- be able to critically evaluate, from a social science perspective, different local and global sustainability challenges and proposed solutions (12)
- demonstrate an understanding of the different resources, values, perspectives and experiences of various groups and how these can be balanced (13)

Course content

The course provides a sociological perspective on the ecological, social and economic dimensions that need to interact for sustainable development to be possible. It also examines how society's environmental and sustainability consciousness has developed, and provides tools to critically analyse why the gap between sustainability rhetoric and practice is still large in many areas. The course explores strategies that take place in the name of sustainable development in civil society, the political arena and the market, and how these spheres interact in the transition process.

Module 1. The Concept of Sustainability, 7.5 credits

This introductory module explores the concept of sustainability and the relationship between nature and society using sociological theories of risk, knowledge uncertainty and modernity as well as environmental ethics perspectives. The aim is for students to gain a basic sociological understanding of the cultural and epistemological background, ideological diversity and often structurally rigid, contradictory framing that surrounds issues of sustainability and the relationship between nature and society. The nature of humans as social, norm-creating and norm-challenging group beings is a dimension that is necessary to incorporate in order to understand the root

of, and possible ways to address, sustainability conflicts related to power, (in)equality and differing truth claims. This dimension is central to the module.

Module 2. Sustainability Work, 7.5 credits

In the second part of the course, the studies from the first part of the course are deepened and linked to practical action at different levels of society. This is done, among other things, by examining how social movements have developed throughout modern history in relation to the perception and understanding of global and local environmental pressures, the treatment of animals, and the link between sustainability and a good life. The module analyses the processes of how and why some aspects of social movements' work have become the subject of policy work, legislation and market applications, while other aspects are dismissed as unrealistic and utopian. Structural opportunities and obstacles for citizen-consumers to put pressure on politics and the market and to change their own lifestyle patterns - sometimes precisely in those areas that are considered unrealistic or extreme according to dominant societal norms - are also examined in the module. Here we apply concepts, theories and figures of thought from module 1 to concrete cases where our analysis and discussion focuses on problematisation, problem solving and visionary work.

Course design

The teaching consists of lectures, exercises, group assignments and seminars. Unless there are valid reasons to the contrary, participation in seminars and group work in compulsory. The opportunity to compensate for or resit compulsory components will be offered to students who have been unable to participate due to circumstances beyond their control such as accidents, sudden illness or similar. This also applies to students who have been absent because of elected office duties, e.g. as a student representative.

Assessment

Module 1. The Concept of Sustainability (7.5 credits) is examined through an individual examination (course objectives: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11, 13)

Module 2. Sustainability management, (7.5 credits) is examined through an individual examination (course objectives: 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11,12, 13)

The course offers a first examination, a resit close to the first examination and a second resit for courses that have ended during that academic year (catch-up exam). At least two further resits on the same course content are offered within a year of the course being discontinued or undergoing a major change. After this, further re-examination opportunities are offered but in accordance with the current course syllabus.

The examiner, in consultation with Disability Support Services, may deviate from the regular form of examination in order to provide a permanently disabled student with a form of examination equivalent to that of a student without a disability.

Grades

Grading scale includes the grades: U=Fail, E=Sufficient, D=Satisfactory, C=Good, B=Very Good, A=Excellent

The student's results are assessed based on the learning outcomes of the course. For the grade of E the student must show sufficient results. For the grade of D, the student must show satisfactory results. For the grade of C, the student must show good results. For the grade of B, the student must show very good results. For the grade of A the student must show excellent results. For the grade of A the student

has shown excellent results.

Full course grades are calculated as follows:

1. The letters of the assessed components are converted into numbers as follows:

A = 5, B = 4, C = 3, D = 2, and E = 1.

2. The numerical grade is multiplied by the number of credits in the examination.

3. The products from the tests are added together.

4. The sum is divided by the total number of credits on the course.

Grades are given according to the following table.

$\geq 4.5 = A$

≥ 3.5 and $\neq B$

≥ 2.5 and $\neq C$

≥ 1.5 and $\neq D$

$< 1.5 = E$

To pass the course, students must have been awarded at least the grade of E on all assessed components. At the start of the course, the student is informed about the learning outcomes stated in the syllabus and the grading scale and how this is applied during the course.

Entry requirements

General requirements and studies equivalent of courses Social Studies 1b or 1a1+1a2 from Swedish Upper Secondary School.

Further information

The course replaces SOCB29: Sociology: Environmental Sociology, Sustainable Development and Environmental Policy, 15 credits.